

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

Opening of the Medical Classes

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,

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BY

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A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honour to be deputed by my colleagues, in their name and my own, to bid you welcome to the Medical School of this University. We wish you health and happiness during the session now begun, and success in your various studies.

Some of you are here for the first time, but you are not on that account the less welcome. You are perhaps fresh from the restraints of school life, or from the more indulgent influences of home; but childhood has come and gone, and the eve of boyhood ushers in manhood as the period when childish things must be put away, if the stern battle of life is to be engaged in at all. It is at such a period that the choice of an occupation or a profession is naturally suggested, nor is it possible to overestimate the importance of the decision; it may open up a bright future, or, like a false beacon, lure only to disaster.

If, in commencing the study of medicine, you

find in your hearts that some other object is the real aim of your lives, I would advise you either to cast it out for ever, or to forsake these benches. If you do not adopt either of these alternatives, you can never be honest, you can never be happy. If you seek wealth, desert medicine and enter the exchange. If you seek fame, betake yourselves to the tribune, to the pen, to the sword. It is at once natural and just that you should expect by your professional labours to acquire a competence or even an abundance of the good things of this life. Ordinary prudence in your future profession will secure you a large circle of admiring, grateful, and devoted friends, and confer upon you a high position and extensive influence in the community in which you live. But the labours of the medical man are not like the merchant's, directed to the acquisition of wealth; such a direction of your efforts will almost certainly insure their failure and your disappointment. Your practice is conducted in the strict privacy of the consulting-room, or in the chamber of the sick, where nothing like fame is to be found. You should never think of fame as your recompense; and your profession is one for which the public voice does not claim such a reward. It is reserved for soldiers and statesmen and men of letters. Their works are seen of men, and they enjoy almost a monopoly of high-sounding titles and renown which they well deserve, and which only a few in our profession do unwisely

covet. See to it then, gentlemen, that your motives are honourable and pure, and you may be sure that *you* will not lose *your* reward.

It is somewhere related of the celebrated John Hunter, when that distinguished anatomist was called upon to deliver the introductory lecture at an important Medical School, that on entering the large theatre of the Hospital, and finding himself surrounded by several hundred young men about to commence the study of medicine,—preparatory to the great struggle in the race of life,—that he was suddenly filled with dismay, at the thought of so many young men devoting themselves to the frightful contest, of earning a living by means of this divine art of medicine, already overrun by competition; his benevolent eyes filled with tears, and forgetting the intended drift of his lecture, he lifted up his hands and exclaimed, “God help you, gentlemen! What will become of you all?” Called upon to occupy, at this moment, a similar position to that great man, I am inclined to address you in very different terms; and, with a full knowledge of the difficulties and hardships which may beset you in after-life, I cannot hesitate for a moment to congratulate you on your choice of a profession. I have no desire to disparage the other avocations of life; but it seems to me almost incredible that any man, however thoughtless by nature, should make choice of a profession such as ours—involving severe and protracted preliminary

study, a lifetime of the most sacred responsibility, and, at the best, only indifferent remuneration—without having previously assured himself of his aptitude for the work, and without a full conviction that

“A wise physician, skill'd our wounds to heal,
Is more than armies to the public weal.”

Assuming, then, that the medical profession is the one for which, after mature deliberation, you feel you are best qualified, allow me, while wishing you God-speed, to offer you a few words of advice at the outset of your curriculum of study.

The means by which medical knowledge may be acquired are various. They consist chiefly in attendance on lectures, private study, and practical instruction. Each of these means possesses a particular value, and it is only by their due combination that a satisfactory result can be obtained.

As to the value of lectures, some difference of opinion prevails. In former days, before printing was invented, oral instruction was almost the only means by which knowledge could be communicated. Erudition was confined to a few, and students came flocking in thousands to be instructed from the lips of the learned. Hence we find that, in the Middle Ages, the University of Paris numbered 30,000 members; while in Oxford, at the commencement of the fourteenth century, accommodation was provided for students in 300 colleges and halls. An important

change was brought about by the invention of printing. Knowledge was diffused ; the professor, without moving from his study, addressed his pupils in the most distant quarters of the globe. Lectures, accordingly, lost their exclusive importance, and books, to a great extent, took the place of oral instruction. But it would be a mistake to suppose that lectures have lost all their value, or that any system of private study can adequately supply their place. It is no doubt very plausible to say that one or two good books may contain all the information which would be imparted in a six months' course of lectures ; and that the student masters his subject more thoroughly, and at a much less sacrifice of time, by studying quietly at home, than by attendance in the lecture-room. In fact, there are various other points to be considered. Very few have the perseverance necessary for carrying out a rigorous system of self-instruction ; and, to the great majority even of excellent students, the regularity of application produced by attendance on lectures is found a most material assistance. Moreover, the lecturer enters into details, he makes repetitions, he employs illustrations, which would be impossible in books, and which would be insufferably tedious if they were possible. Such repetitions and illustrations are especially valuable, when, as in medicine, the subject matter is new and unfamiliar. The student, if left to himself, is apt to fall into error, to mistake the meaning even of the best authors, and

to lose time from failing to comprehend what a little explanation would have rendered clear.

Besides this, no two or three of even the best works contain all the information to be derived from a good course of lectures. Knowledge is progressive ; advances are being constantly made ; and a lecturer, if fitted for his duty, should always be in advance of the most recent systematic work on his special subject. It is curious to notice what a length of time is often required for important discoveries to find their way into ordinary text-books ; and, for the student to derive everything for himself from original sources would be to prolong his education indefinitely. And, finally, by means of repeated examinations, the lecturer judges of his student's progress ; he sees where his own instructions have been wanting in perspicuity ; he clears up doubts, and puts in a new and more striking light truths already partially apprehended.

But, although lectures may in this way be of incalculable benefit to a student, they may, if not used aright, involve an absolute loss of time. Let me explain this by one or two illustrations. One student is, let us suppose, essentially lazy and indolent ; he lolls on his desk, and so far from taking any interest in the subject of the lecture, he endeavours to kill time by *very* rough and random sketches, or by a repose, indicated by nods that do not prove a very intelligent assent to the truths the lecturer desires to convey. It needs no divin-

ing rod to predict the result of lectures in such a case !

Another student is diligent, and desires to avail himself of all the advantages which lectures can afford, but by endeavouring to obtain the *ipsissima verba* of the lecturer he frequently misses the very point or points on which his attention should have been fixed, and his notes become confused and comparatively useless for the purpose of subsequent private study. In such a case time is wasted, not from idleness, but from ignorant misuse of it.

If you would derive the full benefit which lectures are calculated to impart, you must, in the first place, give your whole and undivided attention to the lecturer, noting down each salient point as it presents itself, so that your note-book may contain only what is noteworthy—the very pith and marrow of the subject. These notes, while yet fresh in your memory as well as in your note-book, should be your guide for private study ; in transcribing them, and in thus fixing them in your memory, you will probably be induced to think for yourselves ; to consider the *why* and the *wherefore* ; and, it may be, should time permit, to foster in you a desire for inquiry, or even for original research. You may reply that this is an art in itself—and so in truth it is ; but it is one which is within the easy reach of every student, and which will repay an hundredfold the necessary expenditure of time and trouble.

But lectures are not of themselves sufficient ; they must be looked upon rather as helps to private study, than as superseding it. That private study is of importance you will all readily concede, but I would venture to offer one or two suggestions in connection with this subject, which may be of much practical importance. Private study should not be conducted (as is too frequently the case) *spasmodically*, or, to use a common expression, “by fits and starts”; it should be methodical as well as earnest and persevering.

It is an acknowledged principle in mechanics that the resistance due to friction is greatest at the commencement of motion, so that relatively increased loss of power is the result ; and so it is with mental progress. If, instead of pursuing your daily routine of private study, you allow it to be unduly interrupted by extraneous circumstances, you will find each fresh start more arduous, and the work performed by your mental machinery will be deficient in quality or quantity, or perchance in both.

There is an error against which I would put you on your guard—viz., a too great dependence on what are called “text-books.” One great object in the present day is to popularise knowledge, and to reduce it within the narrowest limits ; hence has arisen a host of manuals or text-books on every branch of your studies. These manuals do not profess to be original ; they are admitted to be compilations ; and

in the perusal of them, the memory alone is exercised—the judgment remains unemployed. The inevitable result of a course of study confined to such works is a cramping of the mental faculties, whereas the study of a good original work has a very different effect. You may not appear to have derived so much mere information from it as from a compilation, but the result on your mind is vastly different. To understand and follow your author, you must string up your faculties, you must prepare to struggle with him. According to the heathen mythology, Proteus refused to communicate information to the mere casual inquirer. To obtain the oracle, the god had to be contended with, overcome, and bound. And so it is with a good book. You must first master your author before you can obtain from him the oracle he has to divulge. Bear in mind, however, that I am far from advising you to discard these compilations entirely; my only desire is that you should take care that their employment is subordinated by a more wholesome form of mental nutriment.

Do not suppose that I would urge you to devote your whole time to study. This would be a fatal mistake; but fortunately it is not one which is of common occurrence. The combination of a sound mind in a sound body can only be maintained as long as each receives its wonted allowance of rest and relaxation; and a departure from this *régime* will be sure to give rise to debility, if not disease. Your mental power for study will be fostered by devoting

a portion of your time to the perusal of the standard works in the literature of the present or the past, and while in this way the mind is enlarged, the taste is elevated and refined. But mental efficiency is impossible without a due regard to bodily requirements. Regular and wholesome exercise is absolutely essential, if you would maintain that standard of health without which the functions of the mind lose their activity. This is no maxim of modern times. The gymnastic exercises of the Greeks, and the training in the Roman Campus Martius, were professedly for the object of improving the vigour of their youth, and supplying the state with a band of hardy defenders, inured to exercise and patient of fatigue. Swimming was one of those exercises especially taught by the Romans, and so essential was this and other gymnastic exercises deemed, that, to express that a man was completely ignorant, it was said that "he knew neither how to read nor *swim*." Should you aspire to that aquatic standard of intelligence which obtained in Rome, you will find in Glasgow ample opportunities for attaining to it; and I would more particularly commend to your notice, as a means of wholesome exercise, the admirable gymnasium attached to this University, which, as far as I know, is without an equal as regards excellent management and gymnastic appliances.

The third means by which medical knowledge is

to be acquired is, as I have said, by practical instruction. In former times this was unattainable in many branches of medical education; in few was it deemed necessary; now, it is considered essential in all. Even in anatomy, in the study of which it has long been admitted that actual dissection can alone insure efficiency, it is only in recent times that the student has been able to obtain the proper facilities for the prosecution of his studies. For ages, religious prejudices and popular superstition forbade the carrying on of such investigations; and even when these had been overcome, it was all but impossible in this country to obtain the necessary materials. This state of matters at length worked its own cure; popular indignation against the outrages which were perpetrated, directed attention to the necessity for an improved system; dissection was formally legalised, and means were brought into operation which have rendered the study of anatomy really practical. What has been done for anatomy has now extended to almost every branch of medical study. A theoretical acquaintance with drugs is not sufficient; the candidate for a medical degree must have been engaged in the actual compounding of them. In our hospitals the student is no longer a passive spectator; he is called on to exercise his own faculties of observation and discrimination, and the practical examination of patients constitutes a

portion of every well-devised system of clinical instruction.

In fact, every year our schools are becoming more practical in their modes of teaching, and, as a result of this, the tests required of a student's efficiency are undergoing a corresponding change in the same direction.

Such then are the principal avenues by which medical knowledge may be reached ; but you must expect to find the path rugged and difficult, and beset with many obstacles to steady progress. This leads me to offer a word of caution to those of you more particularly, who, fresh from the watchful guardianship of home, find yourselves for the first time in a densely populated city such as this, surrounded by numerous and varied temptations. Always remember that if you resist the devil he will flee from you, whether he assume the form of intemperance, gluttony, or licentiousness ; the more seductive the clothing in which these vices are decked, the greater the difficulty to withstand them, but the greater also your victory, if you come out scathless from the trial.

Should you, on the other hand, prostitute the noble powers with which God has gifted you, to these coarse and vicious pursuits, not only will your moral and mental faculties be debased, but your bodily health will be undermined, the vigour of your youth will be sapped, and you will never wear

the "crown of glory" that adorns the head found "in the way of righteousness." In the profession which you have chosen purity of morals, in its most comprehensive sense, is absolutely essential, and the lack of it is certain sooner or later to end in failure and disgrace. Nor can you commence too soon to mould your thoughts and actions so as to fit you worthily to discharge the responsible duties on which you are about to enter. It is during your student days that habits, whether for good or evil, are acquired—habits which will in all probability cling to you for the rest of life.

"When the man you see
You find him what you saw the boy would be,
Disguised a little ; but we still behold
What pleased, and what offended us of old."

There may be, and I know there are, bright exceptions, in which a decided change of conduct has redeemed the evil reputation of earlier years ; but they are very rare. Depend upon it that—

"As the twig is bent, so the tree inclines ;"

that—

"The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day ;"

and that the habits which you contract now will give a complexion to the future that lies before you—either leading you to eminence, or serving to mar your whole professional career.

I have hitherto addressed myself chiefly to those of you who have assembled here to-day for the first

time, and I would now greet with a special, as well as a hearty welcome, the familiar faces I see before me, of those whom we no longer regard as strangers but as friends. An alternation of work and rest is as necessary in the pursuit of medical and surgical knowledge as it is in all other cases. There is not, and cannot be, any continuous and persistent course of action. If we look around us, we see that all the phenomena of the physical and moral world are subject to alternations; and were it otherwise, the whole fabric of created things would fall into disorder and decay. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter succeed each other from year to year, and by their alternations produce those influences on the surface of our globe to which we are indebted for corn, wine, oil, and other fruits of the earth. By means of toil and labour, these gifts of a beneficent Providence are cultivated; but the labour is not continuous. Day and night alternate, so as to insure a period of repose, in which both mind and body are refreshed, and enabled to renew their daily toil with vigour. The whole organic world participates in this periodical enjoyment of rest; vegetables, as well as animals, have their sleep at night, and enjoy the alternations of darkness and sunshine. There is nothing continuous in the physical world, and there can be nothing continuous in the mental one. A mind constantly occupied in one pursuit, without any period of rest, must break down under the unnatural effort. Some, from peculiar strength

and energy, may endure fatigue longer than others, but even these suffer premature decay, and in the end are exhausted long before their more prudent fellow-labourers.

In keeping with this universal law, there is a period of repose in our medical schools. That period is now at an end for this year, and we re-assemble to renew our labours in the hospital, in the lecture-theatre, and in the dissecting-rooms. I hope and believe that, returning to your studies, you have not failed to occupy your vacation months in a wholesome and profitable manner. Rest from the sterner duties that your professional studies involve, does not mean a state of idleness.

“ An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as when it stands.”

The well trained mind will shrink from a waste of time—that precious time, allotted to us for employment in good or evil! The mind of every sane person must be employed on something, and if it be not engaged on what is good, evil is sure to take possession of it; or, as the nursery hymn expresses it—

“ Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

It would be interesting (although, perhaps, humiliating) if statistics could show us approximately the amount of valuable time which is squandered even by educated men; from the miserable being who,

having no occupation of any kind, wanders about trying, as he calls it, "to kill time," to the man who, from want of methodical arrangement and economy of his time, lives in a condition of mental bankruptcy.

You, gentlemen, cannot plead want of occupation as an excuse for idleness; for, were your period of professional study to be extended to twice its present limits, you would find at the close of it that you were still far from having mastered all the subjects embraced in your curriculum. For you who aspire to be *Medical Men* in deed, as well as in name, every day, nay, every hour, is precious; and if you fail to take full advantage of all the opportunities which are now afforded you, you will, in after-life, when too late, never cease to lament your shortcomings.

I must not omit to refer to a question which is forcing itself on public attention—namely, should we not have *medical women* as well as "medical men"?

It appears to me that the question of Female Medical Education may be briefly viewed in two aspects—viz., 1st, Is it desirable that woman should adopt the medical profession? 2nd, If women are to obtain degrees in Medicine, what arrangements are advisable in the way of preliminary study?

In the first place, we have been taught, on the highest authority, as well as by natural instinct, that the care of home and family is specially

assigned by Providence to that sex which is admitted to be the weaker one, while the sterner and more arduous duties of life have been allocated to man.

And this agrees with the structural differences which we know to exist between the sexes, apart even from that softened tone of thought and feeling which we are won't to associate with our ideas of female excellence. Moreover, the practice of medicine is not only the most laborious of all the learned professions, but it is manifestly incompatible with those indispensable periods of rest which maternal duty involves. But it may be urged that this objection does not apply to unmarried women, whose tastes may be such as to attract them to our profession. "Why," it may be said, "should not women who are unfettered by the restrictions of wedded life, devote their energies to the treatment of disease?" This mode of argument is natural enough for one who is ignorant of the details and requirements of medical study; but the objections will readily suggest themselves to all who have a practical knowledge of our work. The work of the dissecting room is repulsive to all our ideas of female modesty; nor is this by any means the only department of professional training which would tend to degrade women from that refined position to which man in every civilized age and nation has looked up with admiration. Ask any advanced student of medicine, if he would like his own sister, or other

female relative (whether married or single), to undergo the same course of study through which he himself has passed. I am confident that the answer would be given with no uncertain sound. And I am still more convinced that there are few, if any, who have had experience of the toil and hardships of professional life, as well as of the preliminary training in which you are engaged, who would desire to see the female members of their own circle following in their steps.

In short, the wonted sphere for women is clearly indicated by Providence as well as by the relations of social life ; it is as vast and important as that which belongs to man, although different in kind ; nor can the boundary line be over-stepped by either without effeminacy on the one side and a loss of womanly dignity on the other.

Secondly, If women are to obtain degrees in medicine, what arrangements are advisable in the way of preliminary study ? It has been urged by the advocates of women's rights, with reference to this question, that the attitude of the medical profession is a purely selfish one ; that they wish to exclude women from their ranks because their craft would thereby be in danger. Now, it appears to me that no accusation could be more unfounded than this. We do not try to curtail the number of male medical students year after year. On the contrary, we endeavour to swell the number of recruits who join our ranks ; nor is there any reason, *ipso facto*, why those recruits

should belong exclusively to our own sex. It is the *modus operandi* to which we offer our strenuous opposition. The effect of allowing female students to study medicine in mixed classes could not fail to have a demoralizing effect on both sexes. Even in school life such a system has not been adopted in this country ; and if, in teaching such subjects as history and geography during childhood, it has been found desirable that the sexes should be kept apart, how much more imperative is it that, in the case of students of a maturer age, a similar course should be followed, especially when the course of study includes such branches as Anatomy, Surgery, Midwifery, and Forensic Medicine ?

Whether viewing the question of mixed classes from a moral or from a social point of view, I cannot help thinking that such a system would be in every way objectionable, and disastrous to any medical school adopting it, while at the same time it would tend to lower the standard of medical education. It is, I think, a matter for congratulation, that a separate "school of medicine for women" has just been opened in London, where women can obtain complete medical education without resorting to the objectionable plan of mixed classes. If women consider it compatible with their position to qualify themselves to become physicians, lawyers, or even veterinary surgeons, I see no reason why they should not be permitted to do so. As to the expediency of such a course we may be allowed to hold

our own opinions, but to them must be conceded the right to judge for themselves—provided however that they do not derange the machinery of already existing schools of learning, which are intimately connected not only with the advancement of science, but also with the well-being of the country at large.

Within the brief space of time which has elapsed since we last met here certain changes have occurred, deeply affecting this University, which it is impossible for me to pass over in silence. We miss from our ranks to-day the familiar and genial face of one who, for twenty-two years, eminently adorned our Chemical Chair, and who so richly merited the regard and esteem in which he was held by his students as well as by his colleagues. Professor Anderson's career, so sadly curtailed by lingering disease, was marked by an unflinching devotion to that department of science which his highly cultured mind helped to foster in no mean degree, and which won for him a high reputation not only in this country but abroad. He struggled long and manfully against impaired health, and when at last he found himself unable to discharge his duties, he laid down his office, as he had held it, with becoming dignity. His successor is no stranger to you, gentlemen, and I am confident that you will join with Professor Ferguson's colleagues in giving him a most cordial

welcome on his appointment to a distinguished position, which he has so worthily earned, and which we all believe him to be so well qualified to fill.

The Clinical Department of this University has, as you are aware, been reinforced by the creation of two new chairs, which are calculated to give increased efficiency to our medical school; and when you bear in mind that your professional duties will for the most part call you to the bed-sides of your patients, you will realize the great importance of clinical instruction in medicine and surgery, and appreciate the value of increased opportunities for studying disease in living books of flesh and blood.

The appointment of additional professors, whose special duty will be to render you familiar with disease at the bed-side, and with the practical application of therapeutics, is a boon which we feel sure you will not fail to regard with satisfaction; and your satisfaction will doubtless be increased by finding that our two esteemed colleagues, who have been selected to fill these clinical chairs for the first time, are gentlemen who are already familiar to you, and whose aptitude for clinical teaching has been so amply proved in the wards of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. I think you will agree with me that the names of Professors George Buchanan and M'Call Anderson, are a sufficient guarantee that the subjects which they have

been elected to teach will not suffer at their hands.

This leads me to allude to a serious disadvantage under which our Medical School has laboured for some years past, entailing an amount of personal inconvenience upon students which we deeply deplored, although we were powerless to remove it. I refer to the great distance from the University at which students in recent years have been obliged to prosecute their clinical studies. We endeavoured, as much as possible, to curtail the loss of time involved in a walk from the Royal Infirmary to Gilmorehill, by means of conveyances which were always unsatisfactory, and I fear generally uncomfortable; but even under this arrangement much valuable time was lost. In short, a *Western Infirmary* became a *sine quâ non* for the University; while, at the same time, the rapid growth of this vast city, both as regards population and area, imperatively called for increased hospital accommodation.

It is not too much to say that the Western Infirmary, although established on a broad basis as regards representation, owes its present position in no small degree to the zeal and activity of the Medical Faculty, who felt that such an institution was essential for the welfare of the Medical School.

The difficulties which we encountered in our en-

deavours to open the Western Infirmary, so as to make it available for clinical instruction during this winter session, seemed for a long time to be insurmountable, and the desired end has only been attained by unremitting labour and hearty co-operation on the part of the building, furnishing, and other committees, who, forming as they did the provisional board of management, were entrusted with the arrangement of the preliminary details. It is not to be expected that the internal arrangements of a new institution, such as the Western Infirmary, will all at once, as if by magic, settle themselves into a faultless routine. New houses, like new clothes, are never quite comfortable until seasoned by use, and even new machinery works more smoothly after it has been in motion for some time. But a short interval will suffice to complete and perfect the working gear of our new Infirmary, and then, I venture to say that, looking at the medical and surgical staff, the internal management, or the arrangements for the successful treatment of disease, it will stand favourable comparison with any other similar institution in Great Britain.

I cannot too strongly urge upon you the importance of regular hospital attendance, as affording you the best opportunities for observing disease upon an extensive scale. Of all the modes by which you can acquire a really sound acquaintance with the practical part of your profession, none can at all compare with clinical observation and in-

struction. This means, literally, bed-side instruction. It is that which we derive from seeing, and feeling, and considering disease as it actually exists before us ; studying it not in books, nor in lectures, but in nature. What you want to know is how to prevent, or palliate, or cure. Here, in nature's own book, you study the history, the causes, the varieties, and the symptoms of disease. The diagnosis, or distinction of one malady from another, never could be learned except at the bed-side. The prognosis, or anticipation of results, would be vague, the application of remedies would be dangerous, without clinical training. It is at the bed-side that you must learn the important lesson that you are never to prescribe for a *disease*, but for the *patient* who is labouring under the disease—that is, you are to consider, not only what may be good for a given disease, but what will suit the patient in every particular, and with a due regard to all the organs of the body, as well as the one affected. The hospital is the true field for the study of *disease*, and of the effects of *remedies*. In private practice you see one disease only at a time, or a few cases at one time, and a few at another ; and you are very apt to attribute to your medicine what is due to nature, or to make the common mistake of confounding the *post hoc* with the *propter hoc*. In private practice, too, you are very likely to have the effects of your medicine interfered with by other causes over which

you have no control. Sometimes your medicines are not taken; more frequently their influence is counteracted by other agencies—high living, the use of stimulants, exposure, toil, and anxiety—so that the effects of treatment are rendered uncertain or abortive. In the hospital it is very different. There your patient is removed from all extraneous and disturbing elements. You can regulate his diet and mode of life, you can trace the natural course of his malady, and can thus only truly learn what *nature* can do, and what *art* can do.

In your hospital attendance, however, you should never forget that your first duty is to cure your patients, and not to view them wholly from a scientific point of view, having regard to the condition in which the various organs may be expected to be found after death, rather than ministering to the disease from which the patient is suffering. For this cure, it should be your first care to ascertain what is the nature of the disease you are called upon to treat; for, if your diagnosis be at fault, your treatment—if not absolutely injurious—will be of questionable benefit.

I do not say that cases will not often arise where you must be content to treat the symptoms of disease; on the contrary, this will frequently be your principal duty. But it is only when you have discovered the diseased condition which nature is striving to remove, that your endeavours to guide her progress will be really valuable.

You must constantly bear in mind the potency and importance of our art, watch nature closely, and yield to her when she acts wisely and well. It is far easier, and requires less experience, to adopt active treatment, than to watch patiently; but if you cannot cure your patients, at least do no mischief to them, nor be guilty of that quackery which says "I can cure," when you know the disease to be an incurable one.

While conscientiously discharging your duty in this way, you should remember that not only is the moral treatment of your patient often more essential than the administration of drugs; but that the former will sometimes bear good fruit, when the latter would be absolutely hurtful. We *can*, and often *do*, "minister to a mind diseased"; and I am inclined to think that we under-estimate the remedial value of the word of kind sympathy, and the expression of fervent hope, which—more vividly than the electric spark—flashes from the tender-hearted physician to the sufferer on a bed of sickness. Even in the sad and unfortunate cases where we can do little but alleviate, a kind and genial manner is such a potent anodyne, that, like a charmed amulet, we should carry it to every bedside to which we may be called.

In attending the hospital, your observation should extend to every form of disease presented to you. To become "specialists" at this early stage of your career would be a grievous blunder, which

in after years you might regret. Wait until you have thoroughly acquainted yourselves with the principles and practice of Medicine and Surgery in their various departments, and then, should your tastes and opportunities induce you to select one branch of the profession to the exclusion of others, your preliminary training is certain to have prepared you for its practice. Moreover, most of you are in all probability destined to engage in general practice, in which, at a moment's notice, you may be called upon to treat any of the "thousand natural shocks" "which flesh is heir to"—from a fracture to a fever; from a carbuncle to a catarrh.

I was on one occasion much pained to hear a member of our profession reply, at a dinner table, when asked if he had many patients "suffering from colds," "Oh, I have no time to attend to catarrhs." I was, I say, pained, and for two reasons—viz., 1st, because I was convinced it was untrue; and, 2nd, because it implied the absence of sympathy with the lesser ills of life, not less than the presence of gross pedantry and conceit. Every deviation from health should interest us; none should be beneath our notice; and none should be neglected by us, which it is in our power to lessen or remove. Moreover, you may pass many years of a laborious lifetime in the daily practice of your profession, and may never be called on to perform any of the capital operations of surgery in which, as students, you now take so

much interest ; and you will find that much of your comfort and success will depend upon readiness to recognize and relieve these lesser ills of life, and dexterity in performing trivial and common operations.

It is not so very long ago since the physician who had learned how to recognize a disease, and to prescribe the appropriate treatment, would have considered his task accomplished ; but at the present day his aspirations are higher, while his responsibilities are vastly increased. Adopting the time-worn maxim that “ prevention is better than cure,” we now endeavour to arrest the evil at the fountain-head, by studying those hygienic laws, the observance of which tends to check the inroads of disease, and thus to increase the happiness as well as the health of our fellow-men. When we think of the vitiated atmosphere which our ancestors breathed, the loathsome drains by which they were surrounded, and the otherwise unhealthy conditions in which they lived, we may well wonder that we ourselves are alive to tell the tale.

Our own sanitary arrangements are very far from being perfect—in fact, sanitary science may still be said to be in its infancy—but we may at least boast that we have roused the public to recognize the necessity of obedience to the laws of health, and point to the sanitary legislation of recent years as an earnest of what we may expect in the future as the expression of the popular mind.

Gentlemen, it is your laudable ambition to become successful practitioners of medicine, and I consider such a position to be one of the noblest to which a man can attain. I would not depreciate the utility of other literary pursuits, nor do I wish to undervalue the studies or the objects of other professions. The natural historian is justly proud of a science which constantly employs him in observing the works of his Creator; the chemist boasts, with reason, that his favourite study teaches him to lift up the veil which concealed some of the most precious and singular of nature's secrets; the astronomer examines the positions and motions of distant worlds, weighs the stars, and follows the comet to the remotest verge of its eccentric orb, nay, he even ventures to predict its return after thousands of years, and feels no doubt that a late posterity will be called on to record the occurrence of the event which he has prophesied. This is a glorious triumph of man's reason, and well may the votaries of astronomy and physical science refer with pride to such victories over space and time; but is there not more of the Deity in a single particle of living matter than in the whole inanimate mass of a planet or a sun? Is not life the clearest, the most direct revelation of Himself which the Creator has deigned to make? When all was without form and void, the Spirit of God moved, it is true, on the surface of the chaotic mass; but when life was to be produced, God

breathed forth, and, vivified by the Divine expiration, man became a living soul, in the express image of his Maker and God. This life—this direct emanation from the Deity—forms, then, the subject matter for your studies; to observe its laws is the privilege of the physiologist; to maintain it, to resist the encroachment of disease, or to defer the approach of death, is the hallowed end of medical science. This is assuredly one of the noblest functions of reason, and for nothing should man be more humbly thankful to his Maker than for having conferred on him the power of relieving human suffering.

To shed lustre over a few short years, or to live in remembrance a century or two, is of small importance; yet for this the scholar labours, and the hero endures hardship, as the summit of human ambition. To shine on the roll of science—to pluck honours which fade, like the flowers of the field, while you gather them—or to glitter among the favourites of fortune—is of little avail to the man who must soon resign, to the merciless grasp of death, even the sceptre of the world, if committed to his keeping. Yet these things are sought amid repeated disappointments, and the golden bait is seized with increased avidity, though barbed with anguish and sorrow. But he who regards the solemn call of duty summoning to the battle of life, or the silent finger of religion pointing to an inheritance above the stars, will find in our noble

profession the happiest incentives to exertion. To repair the breaches which disease has made—to soothe the agonised frame—to raise the drooping spirit—to disperse the cloud that gathers over the “dark valley” by the sunshine of a genial smile—to drop the word of “good cheer” over the bed of human suffering, and under the great and good Healer’s power to restore to health and strength the stricken victim of unhappy circumstances, or avenging sin—in fact, to bind up the broken-hearted fellow-traveller, or give liberty to the disease-bound captive,—this is a God-like, an enduring work—this is *our* work, gentlemen. It is a work as boundless as God’s love, and as holy as his righteousness—a work sustained by a Faith that can remove mountains of difficulty, by a Hope that looks for its highest recompense to the resurrection of the just, and by a Charity that never faileth.

